

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /068 W

----- 107597

R 121124Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2198

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: MRS. GANDHI'S "FIRESIDE CHAT" WITH THE NATION

REF: NEW DELHI 14999

1. ON READING THE UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION PREPARED BY USIS NEW DELHI OF MRS. GANDHI'S 50-MINUTE HINDUSTANI SPEECH TO THE NATION NOV. 11, IT IS CLEAR THAT MRS. GANDHI'S INTENTION WAS PRIMARILY TO ENTHUSE THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO CONTINUE TO WORK HARD, TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE MEASURES THE GOVT WAS TAKING WHICH MIGHT RAISE SOME QUESTIONS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, AND TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF CONFIDENCE FOLLOWING THE SUPREME COURT'S FAVORABLE DECISION ON HER ELECTION CASE. THE EXCERPTS REPORTED REFTEL ON FOREIGN ASPECTS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY WERE BOTH MISREPRESENTED IN THE WIRESERVICE REPORTING AND CONSITUTED EXTREMELY SMALL PORTIONS OF HER ADDRESS.

2. THE ACTUAL TRANSLATION OF THESE KEY SECTIONS IS AS FOLLOWS: AFTER DESCRIBING GROWING DOMESTIC POLITICAL UNREST EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE PM SAID; "ALL THIS WAS DONE
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AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS AND EXTERNAL THREATS. AND,

I BELIEVE, SOME OF OUR OPPONENTS WITHOUT KNOWING THINGS GOT THEMSELVES INVOLVED IN THEM. AS YOU KNOW, WHENEVER STEPS WERE TAKEN FOR THE NATION'S UNITY, THERE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPMENTS ABROAD." A FEW MOMENTS LATER, SHE OBSERVED: "WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR NEIGHBORING AND FAR AWAY COUNTRIES, HOW GOVERNMENTS WERE OVERTHROWN AND WITH (HOW) MUCH DIFFICULTY AND HARDSHIP THE COUNTRY IS EXISTING, THAT WE CAN SEE." "WHAT HAS INDIRAJI DONE? HAS DEMOCRACY COME TO AN END IN INDIA? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE COUNTRY? WE FELT THAT THERE WAS A DISEASE IN THE COUNTRY WHICH HAD TO BE CURED SOON. AT TIMES BITTER MEDICINE HAS TO BE GIVEN TO THE LOVELIEST CHILD, AND WE WOULD WANT TO CURE HIM. SO WE HAVE GIVEN

THIS BITTER PILL TO THE COUNTRY. NOW I TELL YOU FRANKLY, I WAS UNAWARE OF ITS REACTION. IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE THAT YOU ALL MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN VERY MUCH ANNOYED AND SAID "REMOVE THIS GOVERNMENT." EVEN THEN, I TOOK THE DECISION BECAUSE IT WAS "VERY ESSENTIAL" FOR THE COUNTRY, THINKING THAT IF I HAD TO LEAVE THE CHAIR I WOULD DO SO, BUT THE RIGHT PILL HAD TO BE GIVEN." "EVEN PEOPLE FROM ABROAD WHO WERE CRITICIZING THE EMERGENCY SAID THAT IT IS A PECULIAR TYPE OF EMERGENCY, POLICY AND THE ARMY ARE NOT SEEN MUCH COMPARED TO THE EARLIER SITUATION." THE PM'S SPEECH CONTAINS NO OTHER COMMENTS EVEN VAGUELY REDOLENT OF FOREIGN CRITICISM.

3. IN THE COURSE OF EXPLAINING WHAT IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES ARE NEEDED WITHIN THE COUNTRY IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SPHERE, SHE OBSERVED, "WE HAVE TO ADOPT THE GOOD THINGS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FROM ABROAD, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD NOT FORGET OUR OWN THINGS." LATER IN HER ADDRESS, REVERTING TO THIS SAME POINT, THE PM SAID, "SO WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF INDIAN MADE PRODUCTS AND THINKING. I DO NOT MEAN THAT ONE SHOULD BE SO PROUD THAT HE STOPS TALKING WITH OTHERS, REJECTING THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND HELP. WE SHOULD KNOW THAT WE ARE THE CITIZENS OF A GREAT COUNTRY. IF SOMEONE FROM ABROAD ASKS US TO GIVE UP A POLICY, SAYING THAT IT IS BAD AND IF WE ACCEPT THAT, THEN THAT WILL BE AS I QUOTED GANDHI: 'THE AIR SHOULD COME FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE SWEEPED AWAY BY IT."

4. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT NEW POINT MADE BY MRS. GANDHI IN HER SPEECH WAS THAT DRAFT LEGISLATION ON NATIONALIZATION OF URBAN PROPERTY HAS BEEN COMPLETED. SHE OFFERED NO HINT AS TO WHEN THE EMERGENCY WOULD BE ENDED OR TEMPERED, OR WHEN ELECTIONS MIGHT BE HELD.

5. COMMENT: MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS ON THE NEED FOR CONTINUING
SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN STATES CAN, WE THINK,
BE SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT TEMPERING OF HER REMARKS TWO
WEEKS AGO WHICH APPEARED TO CRITICIZE SUCH COOPERATION.
(EMBASSY IS POUCHING TEXT OF HER SPEECH TO NEA/INS.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, RADIO BROADCASTING, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE15040
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750394-0584
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751150/aaaabsql.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 14999
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRS. GANDHI'S "FIRESIDE CHAT" WITH THE NATION
TAGS: PINT, IN, (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006